

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry piece of propaganda in the name of "news," "public affairs" and "documentary," insisting it does not have to give equal time to the other side, days before the election, is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation, and the abuses of the PUBLIC AIRWAVES by corporate interests.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But for some time now, the FCC has refused to take a stand for the public interest and aggressively pursue media ownership licensing suspension, penalties, fines and injunctions when abuses occur. It is absurd for the federal government to be more concerned with Janet Jackson's anatomy than with major abuses by corporate media that affect the outcome of a federal election.

Please force Sinclair to give equal time to Kerry, since what they are airing in the name of "news" is not news, but propaganda -- an extended political advertisement -- and strongly consider refusing to allow Sinclair to continue to use the public airwaves, since they so clearly desire to abuse the public trust.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Let's return the FCC to what it was in the 1960s and 1970s -- an organization that made sure that the media lived up to its obligations and that "news" was news, and responsible journalism, or else what could be the greatest friend of democracy, television, will end up being what Edward R. Murrow threatened could become nothing more than "lights and wires in a box." Thank you.